

## WINNING IN AFGHANISTAN: A NATO OPERATIONAL DESIGN

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**WINNING IN AFGHANISTAN: A NATO OPERATIONAL DESIGN**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

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NATO must succeed in Afghanistan and also transform itself into a relevant and capable alliance for the 21st Century. The current situation in Afghanistan represents a potential military stalemate that is unsustainable for NATO, the International Community at large and the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRA). Combined joint security forces have been unable to provide a sufficient safe secure environment (SSE) for GIRA to expand governance and development throughout the country. NATO's ability to provide a Safe and Secure Environment (SSE) is essential to a successful campaign. The legitimacy of the GIRA in the eyes of the Afghan populace is ultimately dependent on meeting this security challenge. This paper examines how the changed operational environment requires NATO to adjust its Operational Design. It further proposes an NATO's Operational Design by incorporating emerging US joint doctrine to defeat a resurgent insurgency and assist the GIRA's efforts to establish a stable domestic order and sustainable peace. The outcome of this campaign impacts not only Afghanistan but has a critical implication for NATO transformation into a relevant, capable, and willing Alliance in the 21st Century.



## WINNING IN AFGHANISTAN: NATO'S SECURITY CHALLENGE

### Introduction

Make no mistake; NATO is not winning in Afghanistan. Unless this reality is understood and action is taken promptly, the future of Afghanistan is bleak, with regional and global impact.<sup>1</sup>

—The Atlantic Council of the United States,  
*Saving Afghanistan*  
January 2008

There is an overarching requirement for NATO to succeed in Afghanistan, and to also transform itself into a relevant and capable alliance for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The current situation in Afghanistan represents a military stalemate that is unsustainable in the long term for either the International Community or the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRA). The GIRA, NATO and US OEF security forces have been unable to provide a sufficient safe and secure environment (SSE) throughout the country. A failure to establish a SSE will ensure the failure of the International Community efforts in Afghanistan. An SSE is essential to enable the GIRA, with international assistance, to extend governance, reconstruction, and development throughout Afghanistan. Success of the NATO operational campaign in Afghanistan is vital to the GIRA's efforts to establish a new sovereign domestic order and a sustainable peace.

This paper examines the implications of the changes to the operational environment in Afghanistan from 2003, when NATO assumed the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mandate, until the present<sup>2</sup>. It proposes a NATO Operational Design to facilitate a successful campaign in Afghanistan within the current operational environment. The proposed NATO Operational Design incorporates emerging US Joint



Doctrine for both military support to Security, Stabilization, Transition and Reconstruction (SSTR) operations and Irregular Warfare operations. Getting the Operational Design right is vitally important to the outcome of the NATO ISAF campaign and influences the long term future for Afghanistan and the Alliance. The outcome of the NATO campaign influences the long term future in Afghanistan. NATO's success or failure in Afghanistan has critical implications for it's transformation into a relevant, capable, and willing alliance in the 21st Century.

### Context: NATO Strategic Challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

The NATO Alliance was a crucial element of the US strategy of containment in the Cold War against the USSR. The end of the Cold War offers the international community a historic opportunity for peace and prosperity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These opportunities are contingent upon a stable, cooperative, and secure international order.

Today, NATO struggles to transform itself into an effective military alliance capable of countering the threats of the 21<sup>st</sup> century environment<sup>3</sup>. Europe does not perceive a clearly defined, near term security threat to Europe's long term peace and prosperity. The lack of consensus in Europe today with regards to a current threat impedes NATO's attempts to strategically transform the Alliance.

The emergence of multiple lethal, transnational, and asymmetrical threats in the last few years highlights a volatile, complex, and ambiguous environment that challenges a stable international order. The most significant and enduring current threats are Al Qaeda and its allies, espousing an ideology of violence and terror. Current trends indicate our adversaries will engage in a long term strategy of Irregular Warfare (IW) characterized by Terrorism, Insurgency, and other acts of violence<sup>4</sup>. The

rise in terrorism is a statistical trend in the last 30 years and indicates this era of persistent conflict has only just begun<sup>5</sup>.

Despite the political challenges, the US and NATO both need each other to face the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The importance for the US to maintain robust and capable alliances is emphasized up front in US Joint Publication 1.0 which states, “*The ability of the United States and its allies to work together to influence the global environment is fundamental to defeating 21<sup>st</sup> Century threats*”<sup>6</sup>. Success or failure of the NATO Alliance ultimately influences the US national security objectives and its vital interests. It is vital for the US as a lead nation in the Alliance to engage our allies on the need to accelerate transformational change.

The current and ongoing US military transformation is illustrated in the 2006 QDR Chart in Figure 1. The US intent is to transform its capabilities by balancing the force to more effectively operate in both “Irregular” and “Catastrophic” environments. Current debate within the US national security community reflects a discussion for how to best accomplish this transformation. Understanding these environments and their implications is the critical first step of the transformational process.



Figure 1. 2006 QDR "Shifting Our Weight" Chart<sup>7</sup>

The NATO Alliance confronts these same challenges to transform itself and develop a new capacity for countering emerging asymmetrical transnational security threats. The US, as a key ally, must exercise strategic patience with respect to how much and what type of pressure should be applied to the NATO Alliance. Historically, operating within any alliance or coalition requires tremendous trust, communication, and time in order to reap the collective security benefits against a common enemy<sup>8</sup>. NATO's transformation over time is dependent on its members' ability to influence their respective domestic audiences within Europe. This persuasive argument as to the need for change can only be based on highlighting the common security challenges that threaten the US and Europe's peace and prosperity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

An effective US security strategy to counter these threats requires the US to undertake a cooperative approach among its key allies to transform the Alliance's capabilities. The feasibility of transforming NATO is widely debated inside US military circles and within the greater US national security community. Over the past fifty years NATO has developed significant military capabilities. These capabilities are demonstrated today by forces who are actively engaged around the world, to include

the Balkans, the Mediterranean Sea, and Indian Ocean, and even in a limited fashion, Iraq<sup>9</sup>. Nevertheless, the challenges presented by new adversaries to NATO and the US require a more capable and willing Alliance. This demands significant strategic and adaptive leadership by the US and the NATO Alliance.

The challenges to the Alliance's transformation are best reflected in NATO's current campaign under a UN mandate in Afghanistan<sup>10</sup>. The argument for NATO needing to transform itself can be reached by analyzing NATO's campaign in that nation. Challenging issues, like generating and training forces, NATO Doctrine, intelligence focused operations, national restrictions on use of forces, operational level command and control, cost sharing, and the provision of logistical support, reflect the broader strategic challenge for NATO to transform into a relevant military organization in the 21st Century. These issues and potential solutions are analyzed in more detail later.

The NATO Campaign in Afghanistan is absolutely essential to the international community's aim to establish a representative government and self-sustaining peace and security. The success of the international community mission in Afghanistan remains very much in doubt as of early 2008, nearly seven years after the OEF's invasion of Afghanistan<sup>11</sup>. NATO, as of Oct 2006, has assumed under UNCR 1707, the international community's security commitment for all of Afghanistan. The implications of the challenge are reflected in a statement by NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, stating, "This is one of the most challenging tasks NATO has ever taken on, but it is a critical contribution to international security"<sup>12</sup>. The outcome of the NATO

campaign will also have critical implications for NATO's larger transformation into a relevant, capable, and willing alliance in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

#### Afghanistan's Changed Operational Environment from 2001 to 2008: Adjusting NATO's Operational Design

Clausewitz himself emphasized the importance of planning with an end in mind,

War plans cover every aspect of war, and weave them all into a single operation that must have a single, ultimate objective, in which all particular aims are reconciled. No one starts a war or rather, no one ought to do so without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it.<sup>13</sup>

Understanding the operational environment of war and its implications is the first step toward developing any operational design. The environment in Afghanistan has significantly changed since 2003. It no longer reflects the assumptions of a relatively benign environment, as in 2003, when NATO first undertook the UN ISAF mandate for that nation. The current insurgent and terrorist operations have significantly impeded the international community's Stability, Security, Transition and Reconstruction (SSTR) efforts<sup>14</sup>. They are increasingly influencing the popular perception of the illegitimacy of a GIRA that is unable to deliver and extend security, stability, governance and development throughout the country. The international community's mission to assist the GIRA is reflected in the Afghan Social Compact. The Afghan Social Compact is essentially a five-year plan between the GIRA and the international community relating to the security, governance and economic development of the country<sup>15</sup>. In Afghanistan, the relative weakness and lack of capacity of the GIRA to deliver security, governance, and economic reconstruction to the people is only amplified by the resurgent insurgency in the last three years.

## Resurgent Insurgency in Afghanistan

Within the current Afghanistan Theater of Operations, various elements of Al Qaeda, Taliban, and Hezb-i-Islami of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar (HIG) militias have allied themselves in order to re-establish a base of power in Afghanistan<sup>16</sup>. For the purposes of this analysis, these forces will be characterized generally as Opposing Military Forces (OMF). The OMF's strategic objective in the Afghanistan Theater is to ultimately re-seize power in Afghanistan. The consequences of this possibility affect not only Afghanistan's future but also the vital interests of the international community. The OMF's strategic objective requires operationally defeating efforts by the international community to assist the GIRA to establish its legitimate sovereignty with the people of Afghanistan.

The OMF operations can be classified as a traditional insurgency. An insurgency is classically defined as "a struggle between a non-ruling group and the ruling authorities in which the non-ruling group uses political resources (organization expertise, propaganda, and demonstrations) and *violence* to destroy, reformulate, or sustain the basis of legitimacy of one or more aspects of legitimacy." <sup>17</sup> The nature of the Afghanistan Insurgency is reflected by the OMF's political aim to establish a reactionary intolerant Islamic authoritarian political order<sup>18</sup>. A key aspect of any traditionalist insurgency is to displace the current political system and replace it with a system rooted in ancestral ties and religion<sup>19</sup>.

The OMF insurgent strategy in Afghanistan can be classified as a combination of both Military Focused and Protracted Popular War<sup>20</sup>. Bard E. O'Neill, the notable expert on insurgency, classified these strategies based on how the insurgents systematically orchestrated the uses of various means to achieve their respective goals. Historically,

insurgencies do not fit into just one certain classification, but adapt based on the specific aspects of their environment. In Afghanistan today, the OMF continues to leverage selected lapses in the security environment to conduct guerrilla type operations and terrorist incidents designed to promote a perception of insecurity among the local people in order to discredit the GIRA and IC. The overwhelming disadvantage with respect to military forces dictates the OMF resort to asymmetrical warfare in a protracted conflict.

For the NATO campaign, these tactical operations and overall strategy have also adversely influenced International Government Organization (IGO) and Non Governmental Organization (NGO) capacity to bring vital development to the people<sup>21</sup>. The resurgent OMF insurgency is increasingly effective in the use of relatively limited tactical capabilities to achieve strategic level effects. Their attacks target both the will of the population and the international community. Ultimately, the success or failure of the entire international community campaign depends upon building the GIRA's ability to expand the security, governance, and economic reconstruction throughout Afghanistan.

The increased capability of the OMF to create instability through violence can be attributed to the development of a robust sanctuary in Pakistan<sup>22</sup>. This Opposing Military Force (OMF) currently operates along a strategic seam along the Pakistan – Afghan Border in order to leverage the advantages of an established sanctuary. The OMF have capitalized on the ongoing internal stability challenges within Pakistan to establish sanctuaries that are relatively invulnerable from the operational reach of the GIRA, NATO, US-OEF and Pakistani Forces. This sanctuary, developed from 2002 – 2008, is reflected by the resurgence of violent activity<sup>23</sup>. The importance of establishing a

sanctuary to any insurgency cannot be underestimated. Bard E. O'Neill emphasized the "vital role that sanctuaries can play in insurgencies...(which) contained bases used for training, arms, stockpiling, operational planning, and providing safe havens for leaders and facilitates rest and recuperation<sup>24</sup>. Interestingly, the crucial role of the OMF's sanctuary in Pakistan indicates the OMF may have been unable to establish permanent bases inside of Afghanistan based on effective government counter-measures<sup>25</sup>. The importance of sanctuary to an insurgency was noted by the late Bernard B. Fall, a veteran observer of insurgencies: "in brutal fact, the success or failure of all rebellions since World War II depended entirely on whether the active sanctuary was willing and able to perform its role"<sup>26</sup>.

These violent tactical activities are integrated into the centrally important Information Operations (IO) strategy to achieve the OMF's strategic objectives. The OMF IO campaign is directed both at the populace of Afghanistan and international audiences. In the case of Afghanistan conflict, the OMF's strategic IO focus is centered on influencing the population of Afghanistan as the key human terrain in a protracted conflict<sup>27</sup>. Their guerrilla forces and tactical operations are designed not to defeat necessarily the GIRA, NATO and Coalition military forces, but rather to deter the SSTR efforts of the GIRA and IC. These operations de-legitimize the GIRA's capacity to provide security, governance, reconstruction, and development in the eyes of the Afghan populace. Simultaneously, they erode the political will of the OEF Coalition and NATO Alliance.

Much like the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army in the Vietnam conflict, the fact that the OMF have been largely unsuccessful at the tactical level in battles against



Afghanistan National Security Forces (ANSF), Coalition and NATO forces may not be particularly relevant.<sup>28</sup> The insurgency continues to maximize desired operational and strategic effects on the populace of Afghanistan and NATO by increasing the tactical levels of violence in Afghanistan. Utilizing information operations, the aggregate effect of these asymmetrical attacks influences the perception of the target audiences in AFG as well as the population of the NATO alliance. The aim of this strategic Information Operation campaign remains fixed on degrading the “political will” (strategic center of gravity) of NATO’s respective governments and OEF Coalition governments in order to precipitate their withdrawal.

The protracted long campaign of Irregular Warfare being conducted in Afghanistan from protected sanctuaries in Pakistan represents a viable strategy by our adversaries. The OMF are able to leverage their operational design element to a tempo for Irregular Warfare, thereby maintaining the operational initiative while preserving combat power for an extended long term campaign.

The OMF’s ultimate strategic objective is to collapse a GIRA that is no longer supported by either the international community or the population of Afghanistan. The OMF strategy for attaining this objective is centered on the conduct of a protracted Irregular Warfare campaign. Ultimately, this changed operational environment demands adaptive strategic leadership to create a viable and politically sustainable NATO Operational Campaign Design. It will require strategic leadership and personal relationships to fully leverage and unify all of the resources of the international community to overcome the OMF challenge and establish a legitimate, sovereign, and capable GIRA.

## NATO's Capabilities Shortfalls in Afghanistan

The NATO's campaign is significantly challenged to provide a Safe Secure Environment in Afghanistan due to inadequate resources. In assessing the conduct of ISAF in Afghanistan since 2006, Cameron Scott of the British American Security Information Council stated, "The bottom line is that ISAF needs more equipment, greater numbers of troops and fewer operational caveats to properly fulfill its mission"<sup>29</sup>. NATO current Operational Design is organized around geographically assigned forces to conduct essentially security and stabilization mission throughout the Afghanistan Area of Responsibility (AOR). NATO currently commands approximately 46,000 troops from over 40 countries, to include 25 Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). The International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) is currently organized into five subordinate regional commands (RCs) consisting of RC North, West, South, East, and Capitol, and has been since 5 October 2006. This is NATO's first and largest ground operation outside Europe<sup>30</sup>.

As early as June 2006, the operational environment in Afghanistan had significantly changed, particularly in Region South. This change led to a state of Irregular Warfare, restricting governance and economic reconstructive development from being conducted in the region. Sir General David Richards was the Commander of the ISAF during the NATO Stage III – IV Expansion. He was responsible for unifying the international forces in Afghanistan under a single military command from May 2006 through February 2007. General Richards recognized this changed operational environment and its implications in a July 2006 RUSSI article,

The security environment facing NATO troops in Afghanistan today is very challenging. The North Atlantic Council (NAC) agreed the plan for NATO

expansion in Afghanistan on the assumption that the environment would become, in broad terms, increasingly benign. Clearly this is not the case.<sup>31</sup>

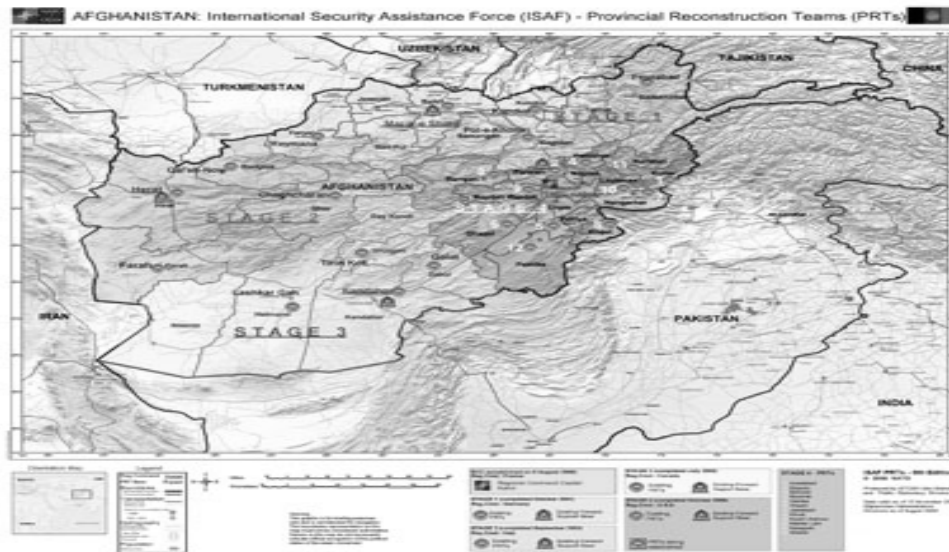


Figure 2: Afghanistan International Assistance Force (ISAF) Map

The expansion of NATO into Region South (31 July 2006) and Regions East (05 OCT 2006) under ISAF IX unified the entire geographic theater in Afghanistan under one NATO Command<sup>32</sup>. This historic expansion was a strategic and transformational success for both NATO and Afghanistan. ISAF's attempts in 2006 to exploit the tactical success against OMF during NATO Expansion into sustained operational success were mixed at best<sup>33</sup>. Regional Command South in particular throughout 2006 - 2007 remained a contested environment with some areas actually remaining under Taliban control for extended periods of time.<sup>34</sup>

NATO-ISAF's 2006 – 2007 efforts in Afghanistan to exploit tactical success were limited by a range of constraints in its security capabilities. These shortfalls include the size and capabilities of the NATO security forces, restrictions by nations on the use of their respective forces, unity of command, unity of effort, and a lack of robust intelligence to support operations. Disregarding for the moment the Afghan National

Security Forces, NATO simply lacks the sufficient size and types of forces to effectively assist the GIRA to secure its entire AOR. The former Minister of Interior for the GIRA, Mr. Ali A. Jalali, noted in a recent article on Afghanistan in *Parameters*, “Obviously, there is no entirely military solution to any insurgency, although a counter-insurgency effort can be readily defeated without adequate military support.”<sup>35</sup> Mr. Jalali goes on to criticize NATO for substituting firepower for a lack of troops, resulting in unacceptable levels of collateral damage and contributing to the insecurity and resentment of the local populace<sup>36</sup>. The inability for NATO and GIRA security forces to consolidate their gains by maintaining secure areas cleared of insurgents to allow extending humanitarian assistance, basic services, infrastructure, and local institution-building is the crux of the entire issue. The counterinsurgency technique of clear, hold, and build must be systemically applied in the local districts and provinces contested by the OMF. These efforts require sufficient sized and capable type forces from the GIRA and NATO in order to seize the key human terrain of the populace.

The shortfall in the number and capabilities of NATO troops for the mission is compounded by the restrictions nations place on the employment of their forces in Afghanistan. The term “caveats” in NATO lexicon are the explicit restrictions nations place with respect to how their forces may be employed in the AOR<sup>37</sup>. The most significant are maneuver caveats that restrict forces to their respective geographic assigned AORs. In essence, these restrictions exacerbate the existing NATO shortfall in forces by prohibiting the ISAF Commander from operationally maneuvering his forces throughout the AOR to in order to concentrate and mass forces effectively against insurgent operations.

Despite significant attempts by the OMF, they have been largely unable to expand and dominate operations beyond their existing geographic areas from 2006 through early 2008. This may in fact reflect a positive turn in the campaign. Nevertheless, the GIRA, supported by OEF and NATO, have been unable to substantially reduce the violence and instability and extend governance and development into the selected geographic areas dominated by the OMF. The importance of information operations (IO) becomes even more important during a potential military stalemate. The OMF continue their strategic communications campaign to increase the perception of failure about security in Afghanistan among the populace and international community

This summary of the changes in the operational environment in Afghanistan provide a basis for framing the challenging issues facing NATO in Afghanistan. These changes to Afghanistan's operational environment dictate the need for NATO to adjust and integrate the GIRA's and IC's efforts into a single Operational Design to overcome the OMF threat and bring peace and stability to that nation. Mr Jalali, in the same article quoted earlier, emphasized the:

...urgent need to develop a consensus among the domestic and international partners based on a unified strategy and campaign plan. The key to the success of such strategy is to legitimize the campaign with demonstrable Afghan government leadership<sup>38</sup>.

A review of emerging US doctrine provides insight into what type of changes may be required to NATO's Operational Campaign Design in order to achieve long term success in Afghanistan.

#### Operational Design Analysis: Elements of Emerging US Joint Doctrine

In the current contested environment, how do the GIRA, NATO, US, and the broader IC achieve a stable domestic order underpinned by a sustainable peace in

Afghanistan? The solutions to this very challenging and complex problem are not simple or easy. A review of emerging US Joint Doctrine enhances current NATO doctrine with respect to the conduct of military campaigns in an operating environment such as Afghanistan. Recently published US Joint Doctrine provides new perspectives into understanding and framing the issue. US Joint Doctrine is designed to enhance the operational effectiveness of US forces and is authoritative guidance for US commanders to follow except when the commander judge's exceptional circumstances dictate otherwise.<sup>39</sup> NATO should consider applying this US emerging doctrine to enhance multinational operational effectiveness in Afghanistan. Some of these elements may be incorporated into a NATO Operational Design and campaign framework to overcome the challenges of the current operational environment.

#### Operational Art / Operational Design

US Joint Publication *Joint Planning* (JP 5.0) articulates the need to understand and apply the concepts of operational art and operational design in order to develop comprehensive campaign plan<sup>40</sup>. The term operational design relates to the creative and intuitive analysis that results in the application of judgment to frame and understand the problem<sup>41</sup>. This process facilitates defining the strategic end state. Operational design is an extension of art by applying science in the form of logic and deduction<sup>42</sup>. Operational art encompasses the operational design process to develop the intellectual framework underpinning all plans and subsequent joint operations. The key elements of operational design are the tools to help visualize the campaign. These design elements may include lines of operation, operational reach, center of gravity, direct and indirect approaches, simultaneity, depth, timing, tempo, forces, functions, leverage, culmination,

and the arrangement of operations<sup>43</sup>. The culmination of the operational design is a campaign consisting of a series of related military operations aimed at accomplishing strategic and operational objectives in time and space<sup>44</sup>. The essence of operational art is to determine how to allocate friendly forces against an adversary's center of gravity (COG) in order to achieve the strategic/operational objective<sup>45</sup>. US Joint Doctrine emphasizes the criticality for creating the operational design based on a thorough understanding of the operational environment to ensure coherence in a campaign. Ultimately these concepts are placed in a framework to assist the integration of efforts as expressed in the August 2005 US Capstone Concepts for Joint Operations:

A comprehensive campaign framework is necessary to integrate the efforts of multiple entities for coherent actions. This framework should include military components as well as various government and nongovernment, national, and multinational partners<sup>46</sup>.

#### Unity of Command / Unity of Effort / Unity of Command

A successful campaign design requires the doctrinal application of three related but distinctly different concepts. These concepts of unity of command, unity of effort, and unity of action are highly desired in any operational design and subsequent campaign in order to achieve operational coherence. US Joint Doctrine broadly defines "unified action" as the "synchronization, coordination, and/or integration of the activities of governmental and nongovernmental entities with military operations to achieve unity of effort"<sup>47</sup>. Unity of effort is more narrowly defined within the scope of military operations for it "requires coordination and cooperation among all forces toward a commonly recognized objective..."<sup>48</sup>. The concept of "unity of command" under US Joint Doctrine ensures unity of effort and is defined as "all forces operated under a single commander with the requisite authority to direct all forces employed in pursuit of

a common objective”<sup>49</sup>. These concepts are extremely important within the current operational environment of Afghanistan. The complexity and scope among the various key actors of the international community across the diplomatic, informational, military, and economic elements of power present a daunting challenge for a campaign designed to establish domestic order and sustainable peace in Afghanistan. US Joint Doctrine emphasizes the importance of unity of effort and unity of action during the conduct of Security, Stabilization, Transition and Reconstruction (SSTR) operations, such as those being conducted now by NATO in Afghanistan.

During the planning and conduct of military support to SSTR operations, it is imperative to achieve unity of effort, through what the Capstone Concept for Joint Operations labels “unified action,” in order to successfully integrate efforts across the “seams” of the wide range of U.S. and multinational military and civilian organizations involved in the many aspects of the operation. ....unified action involves the successful integration and synchronization of the multidimensional efforts of the U.S. military, U.S. Government agencies, coalition partners, as well as multinational and private sector actors, along with host nation agencies...<sup>50</sup>

#### Emerging US Joint Operational Concepts (JOC)

In the last 36 months US Joint Forces Command has produced several doctrinal concepts designed to provide guidance for Irregular Warfare. These US Joint Operating Concepts focus on future operations in the time frame of 2012 - 2026. These concepts are utilized to understand the context of the current operational level environment in Afghanistan. The application of this doctrine provides the organizing elements for the development of an operational design for Afghanistan.



## JOC Relationships

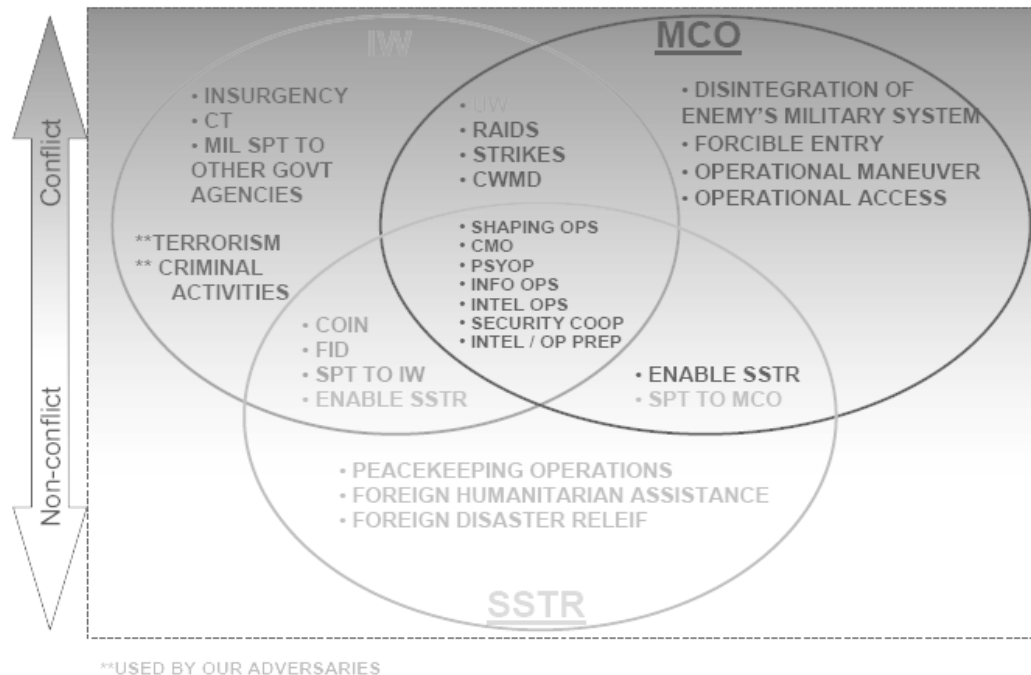


Figure 3. JOC Relationships<sup>51</sup>

Figure 3 above is extracted from the Joint Operating Concept for Irregular Warfare. It describes the discrete, complementary, and overlapping nature of full spectrum operations envisioned for a future era of persistent conflict.

The overarching US Joint Operational Concept addresses the need for the planners to correctly assess and frame the nature of the conflict in order to optimize the campaign design, strategy, and forces required for success<sup>52</sup>. The doctrine establishes a framework for understanding the nature of war in these operating environments and also categorizes those fundamental mission/tasks and force capabilities associated with these operations. The doctrinal concept highlights the overlapping but distinctly different nature, purpose, and capabilities required of military forces to operate in their respective environments. The implication is that the force must have the requisite capabilities with respect to doctrine, organization, training, leadership, material, and personnel

(DOTLMP) in order to conduct various operations. In other words, the forces tailored to conduct Security, Stabilization, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) operations are distinctly different in their capabilities compared to those capabilities needed for Irregular Warfare operations. In the case of NATO in Afghanistan, it is the strategic responsibility for the NATO Alliance to provide both the sufficient amount of forces and ensure the right type of forces are available to the operational ISAF commander. The key challenge lies in the application of doctrine to the military problem in Afghanistan.

#### Joint Operational Concept: Irregular Warfare (IW) Operations

SSTR and IW concepts are two complementary but distinctly different concepts. An operational design and subsequent campaign plan requires integrating both concepts under a single command. The JOC's concept concerning Irregular Warfare states:

The combined joint force conduct predominately IW operations against non-state adversaries in protracted regional and global campaigns designed to subvert, coerce, attrite, and exhaust an adversary rather than defeat him through direct conventional military confrontation.<sup>53</sup>

The doctrine states further that:

Irregular warfare focuses ops on the relevant population and its strategic purpose – to gain maintain control or influence over the population through political, psychological and economic methods.<sup>54</sup>

The comparison and contrast of Irregular and Conventional warfare reflects a paradox with respect to the focus and nature of military operations in these environments.

Irregular Warfare operations are defined as “a violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over relevant populations”<sup>55</sup>. Figure 4 is extracted from the US JOC for Irregular Warfare, and highlights the contrast between conventional and irregular warfare.<sup>56</sup>

## Contrasting Conventional & Irregular Warfare

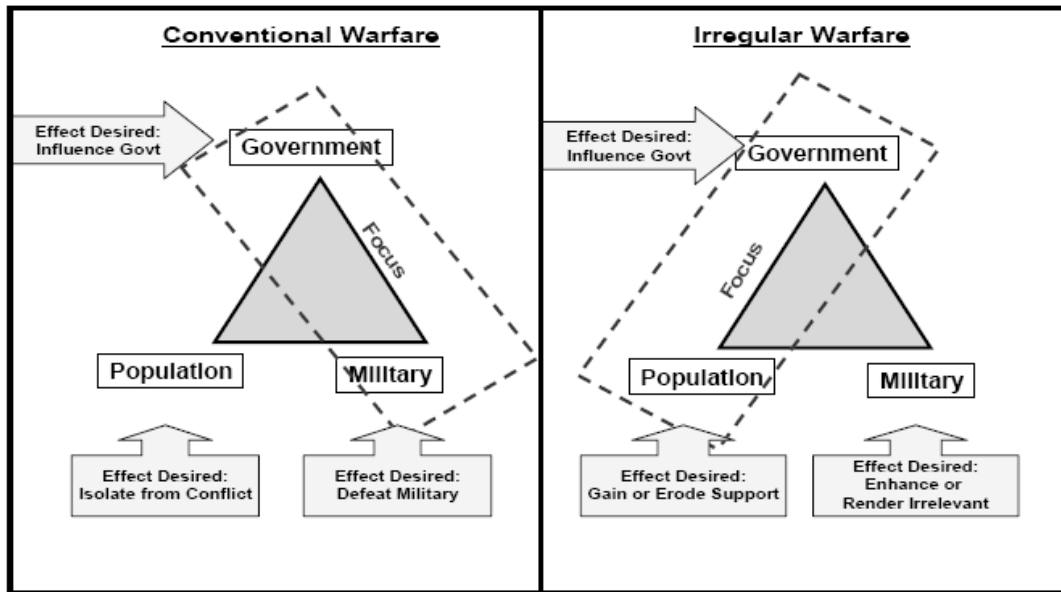


Figure 4. Extracted from Irregular Warfare (IW) JOC

The concept outlines the trinity of warfare with respect to a nation's armed forces, government, and the people, as first addressed by Clausewitz<sup>57</sup>. In a conventional and linear war, the focus of tactical operations are designed to affect the armed forces and therefore the government. The population is principally treated as neutral, or at least of secondary importance, with respect to the strategic aim. This focus of effort changes in a classic Irregular Warfare campaign. It is the population that has primacy for all types of operations. This often is a function of a weaker military opponent which recognizes it lacks the means to directly win a conflict against the armed forces of a government.

The OMF in Afghanistan seeks to mitigate its vulnerabilities with respect to military forces and leverage the strengths of "organizational/political will" to discredit and separate the government from the people. These actions de-legitimize the government's sovereignty over the populace. Irregular Warfare US Joint Doctrine addresses terrorism, insurgency, counter terrorism and counterinsurgency. The

emerging doctrine for IW favors the use of indirect and asymmetrical approaches while recognizing one may also engage in Full Spectrum Operations to erode an adversary's power, will, and influence<sup>58</sup>.

#### Joint Operational Concept: Security, Stability and Transition (SSTR) Operations

The other relevant US Joint Operational Concept addresses Military Support to Security, Stability, Transition and Reconstruction (SSTR). The orientation for the conduct of SSTR is distinctly different but complements the focus of Irregular Warfare operations and is further defined by the JOC for Military Support to SSTR:

The primary focus of SSTR operations is on helping a severely stressed government avoid failure or recover from a devastating natural disaster, or on assisting emerging host nation governments build a "new domestic order" following internal collapse or defeat in war.<sup>59</sup>

The military's support to SSTR operations is to stabilize and assist the host nation as:

...operations...focused on effectively combining the efforts of the U.S. and coalition militaries with those of USG agencies and multi-national partners to provide direct assistance to stabilize the situation and build self-sufficient host nation capability and capacity...the more challenging types of SSTR operations are those that seek to build a new domestic order in a defeated or failed state and are carried out in a contested security environment<sup>60</sup>.

In a contested security environment, US Joint Doctrine mandates the need to integrate both military support to SSTR and Irregular Warfare operations into the overall operational design. Specifically, NATO must be able to conduct Irregular Warfare (COIN and full spectrum operations as appropriate) as a complementary but distinctly different type of operations focused on the insurgency. NATO's Operational Design and Campaign must integrate and synchronize these related concepts and their respective forces into operations against the OMF in order to achieve the desired strategic end state. US Doctrine emphasizes these key elements of operational design where the:

...Joint Force Commander will be required to simultaneously conduct a military campaign with multiple lines of effort, including conventional and irregular offensive and defensive operations, while providing support to USG and coalition agencies undertaking SSTR efforts.<sup>61</sup>

At the strategic level, this operational design implies the need for NATO to provide the requisite doctrine, organization, training, leadership, material, and personnel to develop, and generate these distinct forces.

### Integrating IW and SSTR Operations into an Operational Design

A coherent NATO Operational Design and campaign must have the “requisite means” to conduct both military support to SSTR and Irregular Warfare (characterized by COIN Operations) to achieve a safe secure environment in Afghanistan. This coherence requires improved unity of effort and unity of action in the Afghanistan Theater to effectively integrate security operations.

A key element to any NATO Operational Design is based on a thoroughly understanding the objectives, centers of gravity, and nature of the OMF strategy discussed earlier in this paper. The OMF are committed to waging a protracted conflict to disrupt the GIRA, UN-NATO, and the international community’s efforts to build capacity for governance, security and economic reconstruction development. A NATO Operational Design must overcome these challenges in order to accomplish its campaign objective. This implies NATO must first continue to provide military support to SSTR operations to protect and enhance host nation capacity. Secondly, but no less importantly, the operational design must conduct intelligence driven, discrete, offensive operations to counter the insurgency in order to regain the operational and strategic initiative. These COIN operations must deny the insurgency’s efforts to disrupt the

GIRA's and international community's effort to build host nation capacity. For both of these types of operations, the key terrain is human, as in the populace<sup>62</sup>.

The dual nature of these two types of security operations is reflected in the US Joint Operational Concept on Irregular Warfare. Establishing conditions for success requires enhancing host nation capacity in a contested environment. The concept is illustrated in Figure 5<sup>63</sup>. The campaign objective is achieved by focusing efforts simultaneously to *lower* sufficiently the drivers of instability/conflict with a correlating effort to *increase* the size and scale of host nation capability and capacity. The “tipping point” establishes a self-perpetuating irreversible momentum for a new domestic order and a sustainable peace<sup>64</sup>.

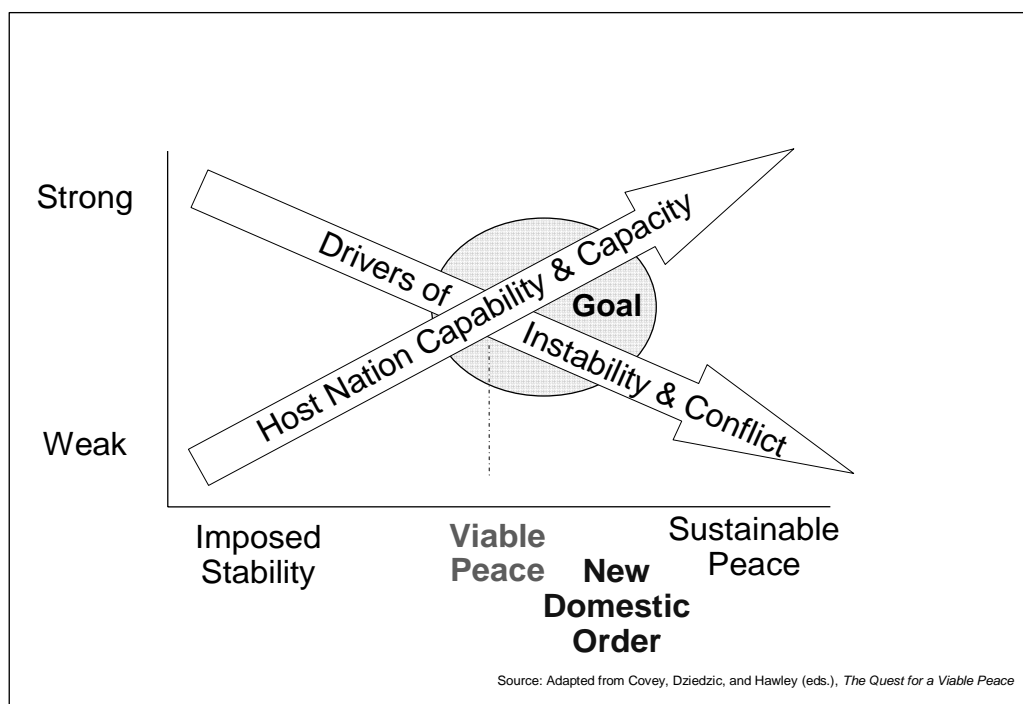


Figure 5. Extracted from Military Support to SSTR JOC Aug 2006

NATO's campaign currently weights disproportionally the limited available troops in theater to providing military support to SSTR operations to enhance host nation

capacity. This is understandable, given the operational environment in 2003. NATO originally focused on providing security and military support to SSTR operations in a benign operational environment. However, the current contested operational environment requires NATO to weight more forces to conduct Irregular Warfare operations with an explicit objective to separate the insurgent physically and psychologically from the people.

There is merit for NATO to incorporate these US Joint Operational Concepts into an adjusted NATO Operational Design to facilitate a successful unified campaign for Afghanistan. A conceptual outline for applying these joint concepts is recommended to adjust NATO's Operational Design based on the changed operational environment.

#### Proposed NATO Operational Design for Afghanistan.

In January 2008, the Atlantic Council of the United States published an article called "Saving Afghanistan". The article stated up front:

One essential step to achieving success in Afghanistan is to create a comprehensive campaign plan that brings together all of the disparate security, reconstruction and governance efforts and coordinates and integrates their work<sup>65</sup>.

The development of an enduring, politically sustainable, and successful NATO Operational Design and Campaign will facilitate unified action by the international community and the GIRA to achieve a stable domestic order and sustained peace. Any comprehensive NATO Operational Design must achieve unity of effort for security operations and must also seek unity of action among the IC to enhance the GIRAs capacity to provide security, governance and economic reconstruction. The strategic success of any adjusted NATO Operation Design requires effective strategic

communications to gain the critical consensus among the key actors of the International Community and the GIRA.



Figure 6. Proposed NATO Operational Design

Comprehensive Operational Campaign Design in Afghanistan.

An overview of a proposed NATO Operation Design is summarized in Figure 6. It illustrates the key elements of a proposed outline for a NATO Campaign Design for the Afghanistan<sup>66</sup>. A short summary of the diagram explaining the overall concept is followed subsequently by examining in greater detail nine selected key elements of the proposed NATO Operational Design.



## Summary of Proposed NATO Operational Design for Afghanistan

The end state for this campaign is to facilitate the creation of a stable and legitimately representative Government of Afghanistan, one that is capable of controlling and governing its sovereign territory. Achieving unity of effort and unity of action among the GIRA, IC, NATO and OEF is essential to achieving this strategic end state. A legitimate and effectively functioning Afghan government providing a stable, economically vibrant Afghanistan is in the vital security interests of the international community. All four Lines of Operations (LOOs) are oriented on the strategic objective to create a stable and representative Afghanistan capable of governing and controlling its territory. The first three major Lines of Operations are: Governance and Justice, Security, and Economic and Reconstruction Development. The fourth Line of Operation involves facilitating enhanced security cooperation through the GIRA and Pakistan to deny sanctuary to the OMF. The complex challenge to counter the illicit narcotics industry is not currently under the UN NATO mandate for Afghanistan. Nevertheless, the illicit drug trade adversely impacts all four of NATO's Operational Design Lines of Operation (LOOs). The overall campaign's success relies upon the international community developing, in coordination with the GIRA, an effective long term counternarcotics (CN) strategy. The proposed NATO Operational Design seeks to integrate an effective CN strategy into the overall NATO campaign. Perhaps the most important aspect of the operational design relates to the need for the international community and the GIRA to achieve unified action with respect to ends, ways and means. This will require the last key element of the operational design, strategic communications. Strategic communications is an absolute critical element to gain consensus among the GIRA and the IC for the way ahead in Afghanistan.

## Key Element #1: Strategic Communication for proposed NATO Operational Design

Strategic Communication is the key to efforts for achieving unity of action within GIRA, UN, NATO and the broader IC. A critical requirement is consensus on the overall operational design to facilitate operational implementation for integrating all the IC's efforts toward the common strategic end state. After all, NATO's and the broader IC's exit strategy from Afghanistan relies ultimately on establishing the political legitimacy and independent capacity of the GIRA. Additionally, strategic communication underpins the entire campaign with an objective designed to change the perception of the Afghan people against the insurgent and in support of the GIRA. The change in perception through strategic communication is based on tangible progress on the ground at the local level. It emphasizes the strategic context of what is "essentially an information operation rooted in substance" to extend the legitimacy and sovereignty of the government of Afghanistan to all areas of the country<sup>67</sup>. Winning this campaign will require persuading the vast majority of Afghans to reject the OMF and support the efforts of their elected government and the international community to develop their country. Lastly, effective strategic communication rooted in substantial and tangible progress on the ground will ensure the vital political will of NATO and the international alliance is sustained over an extended period of time.

## Key Element #2: Integrating SSTR and IW into proposed NATO Operational Design

The contested environment in Afghanistan requires integrating both military support to SSTR and Irregular Warfare operations under a single NATO command. Unity of command ensures unity of effort and allows the operational commander to arrange security operations simultaneously to achieve his ends. Figure 7 modifies the

concept discussed earlier for the Afghanistan Campaign. It visually portrays how the GIRA, IC, UN, and NATO can apply efforts to decrease the drivers of instability & violence and increase the capacity of the GIRA.

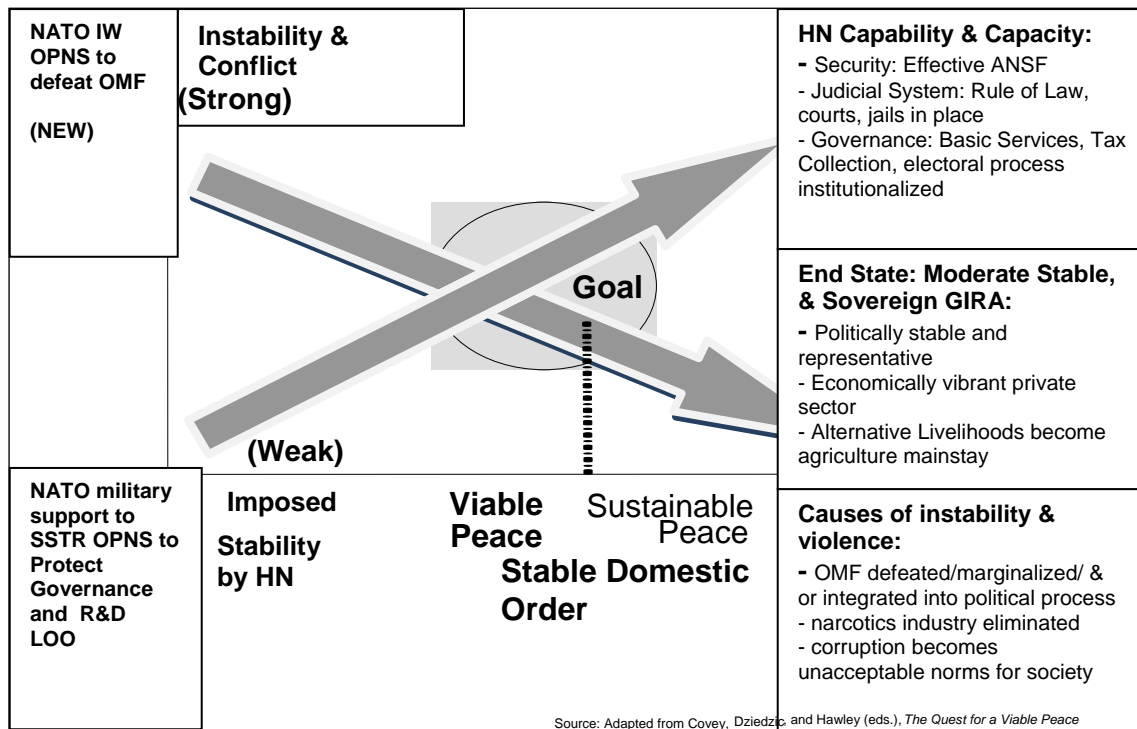


Figure 7. Modified Irregular Warfare Paradox

The operational design element of tempo for IW often measures progress slowly. It may take months or years to bring positive results. This requires careful management of the expectations of the target audiences (Afghan populace and IC) through effective strategic communication under a single command.

### Key Element # 3: Unity of Command to enhance Unity of Effort in Security LOO

The outline in Figure 8 visualizes in greater detail the key Security Line of Operation (LOO) for the proposed NATO Operational Design. This LOO is a key element as it provides the security for the Governance and Economic Reconstruction

LOOs. The three subordinate security efforts are: Build ANSF security capacity; Provide military support to SSTR operations to protect the other LOOs; and Conduct IW

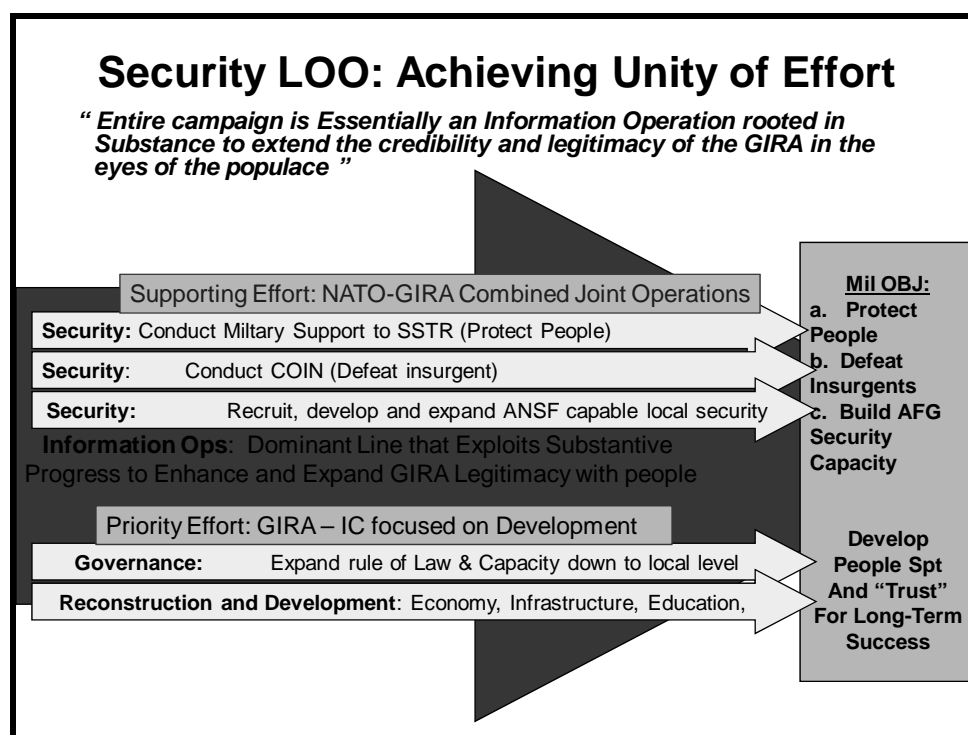


Figure 8. Proposed Security LOO for NATO Operational Design

operations to psychologically and physically separate the insurgent from the populace. The proposed NATO Operational Design enhances unity of effort by ensuring the three distinctly different but complementary security operations are unified under a single command directed toward a common purpose. Unity of command provides the authority to synchronize these security operations into one operational campaign with respect to time and space. The overall security line of operation is a secondary but vital effort for primacy of effort toward the other two Lines of Operations (Governance and Economic Reconstruction Development). The unification of all three elements of security operations will enhance a coherent information operations campaign for strategic effect. Tim Noetzel, a military writer for Chatham House Publications, addressed the issue in a

recent article titled *Coalition Warfare in Afghanistan: Burden-sharing or Disunity?* He states “The parallel structures of OEF and ISAF violate the principle of unity of command in military operations, thus increasing the likelihood of operational confusion”<sup>68</sup>.

#### Key Element # 4: Modifying Command & Control (C2) for NATO Operational Design

Success in Afghanistan’s current Irregular Warfare environment requires integrated military support to SSTR and COIN operations to establish a SSE. This requires applying the principles of unity of command in order to ensure unity of effort for combined joint security with the Afghan theater of operations. The proposed NATO Operational Design would adjust the current OEF and NATO command and control structure.

To modify C2, NATO should conduct a Phase V Expansion to incorporate the OEF Headquarters, Combined Support Transition Command – Afghanistan (CSTC-A) mission to build ANSF capacity<sup>69</sup>. This significant change to the current C2 in Afghanistan would require the US to review the current OEF mandate to determine the cost / benefit for continuing two separate efforts in the region. This recommendation does not propose complete withdrawal of US unilateral efforts in the region. For example, the US counter terrorism mission could still be retained unilaterally under a smaller, separate US command to de-conflict its actions with NATO forces. Unity of command greatly enhances unity of effort in the Security LOO with this C2 adjustment. A coherent military line of operation under a single NATO commander and single campaign plan simplifies integrating the various key actors of the international community responsible for the Governance and Economic Reconstruction Development

LOOs. NATO would become the single IC entity for the Security LOO. This proposal to modify the C2 HQ by integrating OEF CSTC-A into ISAF will simplify security coordination and enhance unity of action among the GIRA and broader IC. US strategic leadership as a lead nation of the NATO Alliance is paramount to bring about this change.

If these changes are adopted, the ISAF integrated HQ command should be re-structured. An initial recommendation is to establish three subordinate Deputy Commanders serving under the ISAF Commander (COMISAF). The Deputy Commander for military support to SSTR would retain oversight of the current five geographic regional commands, military forces, and associated 25 Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). The Deputy Commander for Irregular Warfare Operations would be responsible for forces organized along functional lines to conduct full spectrum operations to include COIN throughout the AOR. This functional command would include a much expanded theater operational force and operational reserve of at least a brigade size. The Deputy Commander for ANSF Security Training Assistance (Previously US CSTC-A) would retain responsibility for all aspects to build the long term institutional capacity of the ANSF force.

Unity of Command under the COMISAF would assure centralized planning and optimize C2 for the conduct of operations under a single command. The integration of military SSTR operations (predominately protect/stabilize/defend) and IW operations (predominately offensive/defensive) under one command would contribute significantly to achieving unity of effort with the GIRA ANSF forces. The desired effects would become apparent during the actual implementation of combined operations under a

single coherent campaign plan. This robust, offensively capable NATO force would be integrated into the overall campaign design outline above. Optimally, the force would be capable of conducting robust integrated and simultaneous intelligence-driven offensive and defensive operations in conjunction with the Regional Commands under ISAF control. Additionally the option exists for the COMISAF to place these forces under the temporary command of the Regional Commanders as either operationally-controlled (OPCON) or tactically-controlled (TACON) to complement SSTR operations in their respective AORs. The ISAF Commander's operational reach and depth are two key design elements that would be greatly enhanced with the creation of these robust Irregular Warfare-capable operational forces.

#### Key Element # 5: Generating and Organizing Forces for a proposed NATO Operational Design

The generation and organization of forces to conduct these operations is the strategic responsibility of the NATO Alliance. This includes ensuring the COMISAF has requisite capabilities required to prosecute both IW and SSTR operations. The IW COIN force must be generated by the NATO force generation process. This will require modifying the Combined Joint Statement of Requirements (CJSOR) for the ISAF mission. A robust amount of forces must be capable of conducting IW operations and be authorized for employment throughout the Afghanistan AOR. The force generation process should stipulate no national caveats on their employment under either the COMISAF or a regional commander. Additionally, the CJSOR should adhere to the capabilities requirements associated for IW operations addressed in US Joint Doctrine, JOC for IW version 1.0. These capabilities require the most capable combined arms forces with respect to offensive dominant maneuver, force protection, intelligence, C2,

fires, and logistics. Currently, very few of the Troop Contributing Nations (TCNs) are able to contribute IW forces, due to either a lack of capability or political limitations. Nevertheless, the standing requirement should be institutionalized in the NATO CJSOR to sustain a long campaign and emphasize the standing requirement for developing of these additional capabilities. This IW force requirement for the NATO Operational Design may serve as the catalyst for strategically transforming NATO capabilities for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

#### Key Element # 6: Integrating CN Strategy into proposed NATO Operational Design

The very nature of CN efforts and their effects on the four major lines of operation requires close integration and synchronization of effort within the operational design and overall conduct of the campaign. The narcotics industry in Afghanistan is very much geographic and seasonally dependent, and this should be considered during the campaign design process. Integrating a CN strategy into the NATO campaign design is essential for decreasing one of the principal drivers of instability and violence. The narcotics industry in Afghanistan has become even more essential for the insurgent campaign from both an ideological, IO, and financial source of power<sup>70</sup>. The extensive network of narcotics and the associated financial incentives exploit the farmers and require a state of instability in order for their illicit industry to operate. As a result, there is a natural alignment of interest between the insurgents and the narcotic traffickers to maintain ungoverned areas within the AOR that support OMF operations and allow the continued poppy farming.

Illegal money (going un-taxed) makes up a significant portion of the Afghan economy, with a record crop being harvested in 2007<sup>71</sup>. The industry has a pervasive



and lasting corruptive influence on the relatively immature provincial, district, and local governments. Regardless of the strategy, its effect on the security line of operation is so significant that it must be integrated into any NATO campaign design to ensure Unity of Action.

#### Key Element # 7: Line of Operation for Enhanced Cooperation to Deny OMF Sanctuary

Within the framework of the NATO Operational Design, denying the OMF sanctuary is the most important element to facilitating successful IW operations against the OMF in Afghanistan. The IC, NATO, and the US must coordinate an integrated and as required separate strategy to enhance security cooperation with Pakistan. The US should lead an integrated coalition effort with a supporting US Military Group Headquarters (MILGROUP HQ) assigned to the Pakistan country team. This diversified US MILGROUP would comprise all US government experts in diplomacy, tribal affairs, IO, military affairs, economics, and law enforcement to work closely with the Pakistan authorities. This element would explicitly focus on degrading and denying operational the center of gravity of the OMF, their sanctuary within Pakistan. The design of such a strategy should not be related only to utilizing the military element of power. It must also integrate effective diplomatic, informational, and economic measures targeting the people of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) in Pakistan. Political initiatives must be incorporated into the MILGROUP's coordination with Pakistan. Diplomatic initiatives to resolve the territorial disputes, methods of governance, and border passage are also essential in this initiative. A key objective for this Line of Operation (LOO) is to separate the popular support of the people in the FATA from the OMF. NATO currently is the proponent for the Tripartite Meeting between the Alliance

and Pakistan and Afghanistan, and has been since the effective late fall of 2006. Areas of discussion include border security cooperation, intelligence sharing and other activities. A successful NATO Operational Design depends heavily on the ability for the US, Pakistan and IC to degrade and then deny the OMF sanctuary from within Pakistan. The implemented strategy must be closely coordinated and integrated into NATO's campaign. This globally significant sanctuary is a threat not just to the Afghanistan AOR, but also to the larger international community.

#### Key Element # 8: Achieving Mass to Implement the NATO Operational Design

Operations must be conducted in accordance with this principle by surging available security forces in a coherent fashion. This involves operations being conducted in sequenced, designated geographic areas to utilize a clear, hold, and build strategy within the campaign design. This allows the implementation of a true campaign strategy to conduct a series of operations in time and space to achieve a desired effect. A campaign that implements any operational design in Afghanistan will be limited by the total number of available security forces to conduct military support to SSTR and discrete but integrated IW operations. The effective way to optimally use these forces is through a phased or sequenced campaign focused on establishing and expanding SSE on selected geographic areas in the AOR. These efforts should remain as combined joint operations integrating as feasible with ANSF as the lead with NATO forces in support.

Additional consideration under this operational design should be given to expanding or re-vitalizing the Afghan Development Zone (ADZ) concept implemented by the GIRA (ISAF facilitated) in the summer of 2006<sup>72</sup>. Essentially, this concept

consisted of the GIRA establishing in 2006 several geographic areas (ADZs) in order to concentrate or surge security, governance (basic services, assistance), and economic development resources. Publicly supported by strategic communication, the desired end-state was to concentrate maximum GIRA, IC, and NATO's efforts into these ADZs to create measurable and significant improvements on the ground in the eyes of the local populace. Optimally, these ADZs, protected by a secure environment, would flourish and expand outward to other geographic areas (creating additional ADZs) in a gradual process ultimately gaining irreversible operational and strategic momentum. This ADZ concept, with the appropriate amount of ANSF/NATO forces under this proposed operational design, would surge IW COIN forces to clear areas of insurgent activity thereby enabling subsequent military SSTR forces to stabilize and protect the follow-on governance and economic reconstruction development LOOs. This strategy, over time, expands geographically sufficient SSEs to enable a "tipping point", thereby lowering instability with a commensurate increase in the GIRA's capacity to extend legitimacy into the targeted areas.

The success of this concept hinges on the ability to provide robust and mission capable security forces capable of conducting two types of security operations simultaneously within the same battle-space. The military support to SSTR operations focuses on stability/defensive operations in order to protect the Governance and Economic Reconstruction LOOs in the ADZ. Simultaneously, more robust and capable IW COIN forces conduct intelligence-driven dominant maneuver operations to seize the operational initiative to defeat insurgent military capability to interdict SSTR operations in the ADZ.

## Key Element # 9: Implementing Unity of Action in the proposed NATO Operational Design

A repeated theme in this operational design is the vital need to achieve unity of action with respect to the GIRA and the host of IC actors (including the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA), the European Union (EU), the World Bank, the United States Aid and International Development (USAID), and scores of individual donor nations). Unity of action ensures the Governance and Reconstruction Development efforts are fully integrated with the Security LOO. A viable instrument for achieving unity of effort remains the Policy Action Group (PAG) of the GIRA<sup>73</sup>. The PAG itself comprises the key leaders of the IC, NATO and the GIRA, and is chaired by the President. It is essential for NATO and the IC to fully support capacity building of the GIRA Policy Action Group (PAG). This GIRA executive body with supporting staff was designed to ensure international efforts across all five pillars of the Afghan Compact (Governance, Justice, ANA Capacity, ANP Capacity, DDR,) are being implemented through GIRA at the regional, district, and local levels. Achieving true unity of action requires the actual implementation of security, governance, and economic reconstruction at the local level, in a coherent manner. The key to success lies in the implementation of policy through the various 25 ministries in the GIRA, as directed by the authority of the PAG. These entities and ones at the lower levels of government (province/district) are essential to building the host nation capacity and expertise to deliver real effects on the ground to the people of Afghanistan.<sup>74</sup>

Operational Design: Strategic Challenges and Implications for the NATO Alliance.

At the strategic level, the UN should adjust NATO's peace enforcement mandate for Afghanistan to enable the conduct of both military support to SSTR and robust IW

operations in a contested environment. This action would provide the political momentum at the NATO Alliance level to increase “means” to resource a new operational campaign design. This action facilitates NATO’s generation of a robust and capable IW COIN force to ISAF. These forces would allow NATO to implement a politically sustainable NATO Operational Design in Afghanistan. The adjusted UN Mandate must continue to build on the Afghan Social Compact with respect to additional resources to support a single operational design. NATO must also build “political will” to sustain operations for a period of protracted conflict in Afghanistan. The nations of the NATO Alliance by their democratic nature find it difficult to build the political will required for any protracted conflict. Nevertheless the need for strategic consensus on our purpose and objectives in Afghanistan is essential for success not only in Afghanistan, but also in regard to its future in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

The US must lead the transformation of the NATO alliance into a relevant and capable force for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. At the core of this effort is the necessity for NATO to “win” the Afghanistan Campaign. NATO must build long term military capability for the conduct of Irregular Warfare and develop COIN forces characterized by high mobility, intelligence driven, offensive military maneuver force capabilities. NATO Allied Command Transformation (ACT) should Incorporate US Joint Operating Concepts for Military support to SSTR, Irregular Warfare, and other appropriate concepts into NATO doctrine. NATO must educate and train the force to effectively conduct Irregular Warfare and COIN Operations. NATO should invest its member nations’ resources to equip the forces with desired COIN military capabilities, as described in the US JOC for SSTR and IW operations.

## Conclusion

An effective NATO Operational Design is needed to win in Afghanistan. This paper examines how the current operational environment requires that UN, NATO, and the international community achieve consensus around a single Operational Design, legitimized by the GIRA.

The Opposing Military Force (OMF) strategy for attaining victory is centered on the conduct of a protracted Irregular Warfare campaign. The nature of the current conflict in Afghanistan ensures a continuance of the status quo in Afghanistan, which is a recipe for failure. The nature of the current operational environment ensures that time is on the side of the OMF. The OMF strategy for conducting protracted irregular warfare is designed to exhaust the will of the international community and the Afghan people.

The current situation in Afghanistan represents a military stalemate that is simply unsustainable in the long term for NATO, the International Community (IC), or the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRA). US, GIRA, and NATO security forces have been thus far unable to provide a sufficiently safe and secure environment (SSE) throughout the country and this inability ensures a failure of the International Community efforts to transform Afghanistan. A benign or relatively secure environment is essential to enable the GIRA, with international assistance, to extend governance, reconstruction, and development throughout Afghanistan. Finally, the success of the NATO operational campaign in Afghanistan is vital to the international community's efforts to establish a new domestic order and sustainable peace.

NATO has been decisively engaged in the campaign in Afghanistan over the last two years since unifying the AOR under ISAF. The strategic decision to engage and assume near-complete responsibility for this theater of operations may serve as the

positive catalyst for NATO transformation, as the debate to transform NATO is no longer a theoretical abstract for unlimited discussion: transformation is already under way on the ground in Afghanistan. For NATO, Afghanistan places the blood and treasure from all of its contributing nations into harm's way in the form of thousands of troops serving honorably throughout the country. Their resilience and courage serve as a shining example of the NATO Alliance. These soldiers demonstrate daily the ability to adapt and overcome the challenges of the current operational environment. It is now time for the NATO Alliance, comprised of the leadership of NATO, the North Atlantic Council, their respective national governments and people to do the same.

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<sup>5</sup> Bard E. O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism* (McClean: V.A.: Brassey, 1990), 1-2.

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<sup>17</sup> O'Neill, 13.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 34-35, 41

<sup>21</sup> Cordesman, 13, 19.

<sup>22</sup> SENLIS Council, *Stumbling into Chaos: Afghanistan on the Brink*, 55.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>24</sup> O'Neill, 117.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.



<sup>26</sup> Bernard B. Fall, *Street Without Joy* (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole, 1964), 294; quoted in Bard E. O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism* (McClean, VA: Brassey, 1990), 117.

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<sup>31</sup> David Richards, "NATO in Afghanistan, Transformation on the Front Line," *Royal United Services Institute* (July 2006), 3-4.

<sup>32</sup> "International Security Assistance Force: Chronology,"

<sup>33</sup> Author's explanatory note: ISAF IX conducted Stage III Expansion to Region South 31 July 2006. ISAF's RC SOUTH was immediately challenged by significant number of OMF forces in a conventional battle just west of Kandahar in the Panjwaii District. OMF forces occupied defensive positions in this area throughout August and Sept of 2006, and interdicted the national "Ring Road" Highway 1 leading into Kandahar. ISAF RC South led a significant Brigade sized (+) force in Operation MEDUSA to first contain, and then attack to defeat the OMF forces. This large scale conventional operation was successful in defeating the OMF, re-seizing the Panjwai District and displacing remnant OMF forces. An estimated 200 OMF were killed, 80 captured, and estimates of 180 OMF reported fleeing the AO by late Sept 2006. OP MEDUSA though tactically successful, revealed several shortfalls in NATO operations ability to integrate intelligence, C2, integrate fires and maneuver, logistics and most importantly at the operational level; mass maneuver forces to contain the entire OMF force. As a result, sizeable portions of the OMF forces were able to displace and resume asymmetrical operations throughout the AOR. Several NATO TCN governments during the operation when directed to reinforce OP MEDUSA by re-deploying forces to the AO declared "national caveats". These actions restricted the employment of their forces outside of their geographically assigned AORs. As a result, the ISAF Commander's ability to operationally maneuver additional forces to mass against the OMF was significantly restricted thereby hampering the overall success of the operation. ISAF's ability to sustain sufficient numbers of security forces in the MEDUSA AO hindered the full exploitation of tactical success into an operational success. Author was the Chief CJ35 Current Plans ISAF IX from 30 June 2006 – 04 February 2007. For more information on OP MEDUSA Access Google Query: Operation Medusa.

<sup>34</sup> SENLIS Council, *Stumbling into Chaos: Afghanistan on the Brink*, 7-20.

<sup>35</sup> Ali J. Jalali, "Afghanistan Re-Gaining Momentum," *Parameters* 37 (Winter 2007-2008): 14.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>37</sup> Scott, IV, 4,5.

<sup>38</sup> Jalali, 16.

<sup>39</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, A-1.

<sup>40</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Planning*, Joint Publication 5 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 26 December 2006), IV-1, IV- 5, IV-7.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Capstone for Joint Operational Concepts*, Version 2.0 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, August 2005), 26.

<sup>47</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, xii.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., xv

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., v.

<sup>51</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Irregular Warfare (IW) Joint Operating Concept (JOC)*, 15.

<sup>52</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Capstone for Joint Operational Concepts*, 11.

<sup>53</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Irregular Warfare (IW) Joint Operating Concept (JOC)*, 19.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 89.

<sup>58</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Irregular Warfare (IW) Joint Operating Concept (JOC)*, 9.

<sup>59</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Military Support to Stabilization, Security, Transition and Reconstruction Operations, Joint Operating Concept (JOC)*, Version 2.0 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, December 2006), 1-5.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., I-V.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., VI.

<sup>62</sup> O'Neill, 59-61.

<sup>63</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Military Support to Stabilization, Security, Transition and Reconstruction Operations, Joint Operating Concept (JOC), 39-40.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 39-40.

<sup>65</sup> Atlantic Council of the United States, Saving Afghanistan: An Appeal and Plan for Urgent Action, 1.

<sup>66</sup> U.S. Army War College, AY 2008 Seminar 17 Student Briefing Presentation given by LTC Ian Hope, CA Army, on 19 Dec 2007, *Example LOOs from CFC-A 2006 Campaign: Strategy for Success in Afghanistan*, Slide 3. Explanatory note: Slide 3 is modified by author COL Brad Booth for an NATO Operational Design proposal focused on four Lines of Operations.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Tim Noetzel and Sibylle Scheipers, *Coalition Warfare in Afghanistan: Burden-sharing or Disunity?*, Briefing Paper (London: Chatham House, October 2007), 3; available from [http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/files/9878\\_bp1007afghanistan.pdf](http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/files/9878_bp1007afghanistan.pdf); Internet; accessed 06 January 2008, 3.

<sup>69</sup> U.S. Army War College, *INMS Case Study Analysis: C2 for Afghanistan 2003 to 2007* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, Implementing National Military Strategy, Lesson 24: Theater Organization Command and Control. Department of Military Strategy, Planning, and Operations: Case Study Operations Enduring Freedom & Iraqi Freedom, 14 January 2008), 24.

<sup>70</sup> SENLIS Council, 43.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Greg Mills, Terrence McNamee and Denny Lane, *Security Vortex, Warlords and Nation Building*, Briefing Paper (London: Royal United Service Institute for Defence and Security Studies, September 01, 2006), 1; available from <http://www.rusi.org/news/ref:N454899C5DABDA/>; Internet accessed 20 March 2008, 1.

<sup>73</sup> Richards, 3-4.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.